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King County Councilmember **Dow CONSTANTINE**

District 8 Summer 2002



Dear Friend and Neighbor,

In January I was appointed to serve you on the King County Council, succeeding new Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels. I am honored to be your representative on the Council and look forward to our continued work together.

Since 1996, I have been privileged to serve as a member of the 34th District’s delegation in Olympia, first in the House of Representatives and then in the Senate.

While my title has changed, my commitment to protecting the environment, fostering safe communities, and working for regional transportation solutions remains the same.

King County faces an extremely difficult financial situation. While demand for state mandated services grows, revenues are shrinking even more rapidly. As a member of the Budget Committee, I am working with my Council colleagues and Executive Sims to create both immediate and long-term solutions for the County.

I have included information in this newsletter regarding the committees on which I serve, and issues facing King County and our district. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine
Metropolitan King County Council
District 8

Please stay in touch. Contact me at:

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Committee Assignments

Chair:

- Labor, Operations and Technology

Member:

- Law, Justice and Human Services
- Budget and Fiscal Management
- Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas
- Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space
- Board of Health

What does King County do for me?

With a population greater than 1.7 million people, King County is the 12th largest of the nation's 3100 counties. King County is larger than ten states and is home to nearly 1 in 4 citizens of Washington.

Every day King County:

- Provides about 274,000 rides on Metro (if you lined up 274,000 cars end to end, the line would extend 882 miles);
- Maintains 200 miles of hiking and biking trails as well as regional parks;
- Treats 192 million gallons of wastewater;
- Processes 168 men and women into the regional jails (over a year that's about enough people to fill Safeco Field and Key Arena);
- Maintains a road system 1,900 miles long (about the distance from here to Chicago); and
- Serves as the local government for the 352,000 residents of unincorporated King County.

King County Budget Crisis: Challenges for 2002 and Beyond

King County is facing unprecedented budget challenges in 2002 and beyond. The 2002 budget required reductions of \$41 million from the expenditure level which was needed just to maintain existing services.

The projections for 2003-2005 indicate another shortfall of at least \$110 million. Human services and county park users have already been impacted by the financial situation, and King County has instituted a hiring freeze.

Since we have little control over declining revenues, my goal is to make the inevitable cuts to programs and services as fairly and rationally as possible. In Olympia, I served as Vice Chair of the Ways and Means Committee and now serve on the County Council's Budget and Fiscal Management Committee. I expect to use every bit of experience I gained at the state level to address the challenges facing King County.

Maury Island Conservation Initiative

Protection of critical nearshore salmon habitat has been identified as a top priority by King County's watershed planning process. The Maury Island Conservation Initiative is a unique private/public partnership formed by Cascade Land Conservancy to facilitate acquisition and preservation of valuable nearshore habitat.

In conjunction with Cascade Land Conservancy I have:

- ✓ Placed the Initiative on King County's Federal Legislative Agenda;
- ✓ Met with the Washington Congressional delegation to seek federal funds for the Maury Island Conservation Initiative;
- ✓ Coordinated with key environmental groups to gain their support of the Initiative.

Seeking Solutions to the Budget Crisis

King County must:

- Stabilize funding for parks, human services, and other critical programs which are at risk;
- Innovate to reduce criminal justice costs and improve safety;
- Institute performance measures to maximize efficiencies and reduce overhead; and
- Seek new ideas from citizens and employees to lower costs and improve services.

District 8 Highlights

- AT&T Broadband provided computers and computer labs to Salmon Creek Elementary School and to the New Start Program in White Center. I am pleased that King County was able to play a part in this innovative relationship between AT&T and our local schools.
- Coordinating with the City of Seattle and with the help of King County Executive Ron Sims, I obtained funding to continue the Elliott Bay Water Taxi through this summer, providing alternative transportation between West Seattle and downtown.
- I have advocated for a fair share of transportation funding for repair or replacement of the Alaskan Way viaduct, as well as better funding of ferries and transit. Passenger ferries have the dual benefit of providing efficient transportation for islanders and keeping cars out of congested neighborhoods.
- I am pleased that Safeco Corporation has donated a new electronic scoreboard to King County's Mel Olsen Stadium in White Center. Our district's youth benefit when business and government work together to improve our facilities.
- Public/private partnership has also made it possible to improve an outdoor basketball venue at White Center Park. The Seattle Sonics and Storm, along with Voicestream Wireless, paid for refurbishment of the courts at the county park.



Commuters boarding the water taxi for another busy summer season.

Transportation: Finding solutions to gridlock

Creating a plan to fix our region's enormous transportation problems is critical to King County's economic health, the future of our environment and our quality of life. King County must work within the limited and imperfect options provided by the State to find solutions to clogged roadways, stalled freight and frustrated commuters.

As we work to get citizens and goods moving again, stable funding for public transportation must be a critical component. A roads-only solution is no solution at all.